



What they are saying about Jay Rockefeller

“Senator Rockefeller has been a passionate supporter of Toyota and our West Virginia powertrain operations since it first opened in 1996. No one was more instrumental in convincing Toyota executives to establish our powertrain production plant in his state. It was one of the best decisions we could have made. He has continued to be a true friend and believer in Toyota and its quality-driven workforce. When we celebrated production of the plant’s 10 millionth powertrain unit, it was appropriate for him to help us mark this important milestone. With his help, West Virginia will continue to be a significant part of Toyota’s effort to localize production in North America. I am proud to call the Senator my friend and I congratulate him on this most deserving award.”

~ Dr. Shoichiro Toyoda, Honorary Chairman, Toyota Motor Manufacturing

“One of the most important economic development projects that I’ve seen in West Virginia was the one that brought Toyota to West Virginia. This could have never happened without the hard and smart work of Senator Rockefeller. It was his determination, skill and total commitment to this project that made it happen.”

~ Gaston Caperton, Governor of West Virginia, 1989-1997

“Every Team Member at Toyota, West Virginia is appreciative of Senator Rockefeller and his efforts in bringing a company like Toyota to our state. Staying close to home was very important to my wife, Nikki, and me. Toyota gave us the opportunity to raise our family in the state that we love.

“Toyota is much more than a job with good pay and benefits. It is a company that believes in community. Toyota not only encourages Team Member involvement in their community, they reward you for it. My wife and I have always stressed the importance of giving and volunteering to our four daughters. Toyota has provided the avenue to show our girls how to do that. In fact, Toyota Team Members volunteer thousands of hours each year as coaches, firefighters, mentors and more. I don’t think Senator Rockefeller could have ever dreamed of the impact he would have, not only on the lives of Toyota Team Members, but on the surrounding community.

“I have spoken with Senator Rockefeller on several occasions and one thing is clear. He is proud of West Virginia and he is proud of Toyota. I hope he knows we are proud of him too. My story is just one of thousands. On behalf of the over 1,300 Team Members at Toyota West Virginia, I would like to thank Senator Rockefeller for truly changing our lives. He is our Senator, but he is also our friend.”

~ Matt Oliver, one of the first employees at Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia

“Senator Rockefeller has been a very good friend, supporter, and advisor to Hino. He began courting Hino in Japan in 2001 and, along with other State officials, worked tirelessly over the next six years to convince us to locate in West Virginia. His commitment to Hino has remained strong: he has visited the plant in Williamstown many times; calls frequently to see how we are doing; and his staff is always available to provide constituent services. We hope to see him more, not less, in his retirement from the Senate.”

~ Hideyuki Omata, President of Hino Motors Manufacturing USA, Inc.

“I have seen firsthand the Senator’s efforts, in Japan and here in West Virginia. Senator Rockefeller is held in great esteem by the Japanese. He is trusted and respected, and recognized by the Japanese as being deeply committed to improving relationships between our two great nations and look for mutual opportunities for success. As West Virginians, we are all beneficiaries of his tireless efforts to build and strengthen relationships with the Japanese.

“Senator Rockefeller is selfless and generous. He actively involves others in economic development activities. He freely shares with others recognition for the many successes West Virginia has had in attracting Japanese investment to West Virginia. Several West Virginia Governors have traveled to Japan on a regular basis to maintain and nurture West Virginia’s relationship with Japan, begun so long ago by Senator Rockefeller. These continuing efforts fill Senator Rockefeller with pride, and he looks forward to West Virginia’s relationship with Japan continuing to grow and strengthen for a long time to come.”

~ Tom Heywood, Managing Partner, Bowles-Rice LLP

“The relationship West Virginia enjoys with Japan is unlike that of any other state – and it all started with Jay Rockefeller. Not only have 20 Japanese companies invested in West Virginia, but many have reinvested, expanded and continue to thrive in the state. Jay Rockefeller led missions to Japan as governor and established strong connections in the country. As senator, he has worked in cooperation with the six governors that succeeded him as each visited Japan and reaffirmed West Virginia’s commitment to the relationship. The impact of Senator Rockefeller’s work will be felt for years to come as Japan and West Virginia continue to develop mutually beneficial trade and investment opportunities.”

~ Steve Spence, Director, International Division, West Virginia Development Office

"Senator Rockefeller has a natural gift of not only understanding government and good public policy but also a gift and talent to work with industry, especially Japanese industry. I have had the privilege to accompany him on several visits to Japan which included meeting with many of the Japanese Corporate giants. He speaks their language, he understands their culture and respects their business practices and government policies. That is why he has been so successful in making Japanese business leaders feel so comfortable in investing capital in West Virginia and creating new employment opportunities for West Virginia's workforce. My hope is he will continue to use his talents to help West Virginia into its future. I will never forget what I have learned from my experiences with him and cherish the memories of great new opportunities that Senator Rockefeller created for West Virginia through his relationship with Japan."

~ John Smolak, Director of Economic and Business Development, AEP; former board member, Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation

"Senator Rockefeller is recognized by Japan's government and business leaders as being absolutely indispensable in the relationship between Japan and West Virginia, and between Japan and the United States. The Japanese people adore him for his spot-on understanding of what makes those relationships work, for his actions that propel those relationships forward and thereby reap concrete benefits, and for the Senator's down-home, affable style that makes those relationships even stronger and more meaningful.

"Senator Rockefeller would traditionally visit Japan with a delegation around the beginning of January. One year, when the President Clinton hearings were in full broil, and when it appeared as if the Senator would have to cancel his visit to Japan, the Senator was still able to catch a later flight and keep his commitments. This, while maybe not such a big deal to us westerners, was a huge deal to Japan. Senator Rockefeller was elbows deep in helping to resolve this mess, yet he valued his relationship with Japan enough to get out of Washington D.C., get on a 14-hour flight to Japan, and spend three days meeting and greeting his friends there. It's not every day that you see such commitment and dedication to keeping promises and building relationships. The Japanese people know that, too."

~Ken Crockett, West Virginia native and Japan resident, former director, West Virginia Economic Development Office, Nagoya, Japan